



Vermont Conference, UCC Electronic Keeping in Touch

EQUIPPING CONGREGATIONS FOR CHRIST'S
MINISTRY AND MISSION TODAY AND TOMORROW

E-Kit

Feb 1, 2017

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Vermont Conference News

Lynn Bujnak will be assisting with worship and attending the Annual Meeting in Morrisville

Jim Thomas will be preaching in Randolph Center



[UCC News and Updates](#)



'The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

Last week I was with many of our interim pastors as we continued to acquaint ourselves with the new Local Church Profile. One of the changes from the 'vintage' Local Church Profile is the disappearance of the 'List of Leadership Expectations'. Perhaps you remember that list. It began with 'Our Church needs a person who...' followed by a list of 43 attributes. Every member of the church was to choose their top twelve desires. Those were gathered and collated by the Search Committee and the Local Church Profile put an X beside the top twelve congregational desires. I have almost always heard, 'How can we choose just twelve. We want all of them!' At the same time, the Ministerial Profile also had that same list and the candidate was supposed to mark X beside their top leadership attributes. And in the end,



[Click image to read about Be The Church](#)

Demonstrators crowd airports, city streets, condemning Trump clampdown on refugees

Commentary: Remember the people behind the policies

'God's Open Doors' in Albuquerque prominently proclaim church welcome

2,000 interfaith leaders oppose changes in refugee resettlement

UCC seeks help from churches to replenish CWS storm supplies

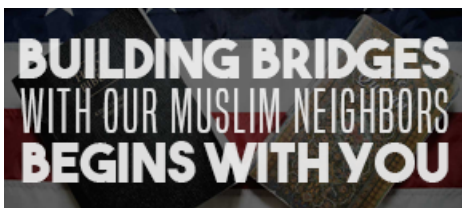
Faith leaders condemn Trump's ban on refugees as un-American

CT, MA and RI Boards commit to forming new Conference

Commentary: Faith in the Future

Activists push back against Trump clampdown on immigrants and refugees

[More UCC news](#)



[Click image for more information.](#)



both Search Committees and Candidates wondered how helpful the exercise was.

Well, two years ago a new Ministerial Profile was unveiled. Guess what was left out? You are right! That list was left out. And guess what else? It's been left out of the new Local Church Profile as well.

The group that has been working on this new profile for the last two years realized that this list of 43 expectations was a maintenance-based list of those attributes and desires that will keep us satisfied.

I'm not sure that Jesus came to keep us satisfied. And I'm not sure that Jesus is very satisfied when observing his Body on earth, the church, resting in comfortable ruts and routines that simply satisfy us.

I'm pretty sure that Jesus came to wake us up to the ways we are much too comfortable while allowing too many others to be uncomfortable, unwanted, afraid and hopeless.

So what does the local church need to wake us up? Both of these new Profiles - both Local Church and Ministerial - refer to something called 'Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministry'. Our Church and Ministry Committees are already using these Marks with their Members in Discernment as they observe and discern MID's growing and deepening practice and integration and sometime even passion in vital areas of ministry and faithful discipleship. These Marks correlate with what the United Church of Christ learned from our most vital and vibrant churches and pastors. Churches that were large and small and in between. Churches that were rural, suburban and urban. Churches in every geographic area of our country.

11 Facts About Vital UCC Congregations:

1. Making a real difference in the lives of its members and the wider community
2. Not necessarily growing numerically
3. Working for Social Justice
4. Willing to meet new challenges

Food for Thought

Focus Scripture

Matthew 5:1-12

Sigmund Freud, 20th century

"Impossible." (after reading the Sermon on the Mount)

Kurt Vonnegut, 20th century

"For some reason, the most vocal Christians among us never mention the Beatitudes (Matthew 5). But, often with tears in their eyes, they demand that the Ten Commandments be posted in public buildings. And of course, that's Moses, not Jesus. I haven't heard one of them demand that the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, be posted anywhere. 'Blessed are the merciful' in a courtroom? 'Blessed are the peacemakers' in the Pentagon? Give me a break!"

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, 20th century

"We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer."

Alice Walker, 21st century

"HELPED are those whose every act is a prayer for peace; on them depends the future of the world."

Ronnie McBrayer, How Far Is Heaven?: Rediscovering the Kingdom of God in the Here and Now,

5. Take advantage of programs offered by the denomination
6. Clarity about mission
7. More Prayer and Bible Study groups
8. Stronger stewardship and organization practices
9. Training lay leaders
10. Worship: joyful, innovative, inspiring and thought-provoking
11. Fellowship and love for each other

Did you notice 7, 9, 10, 11? They are the places where people gather to build relationship with God and one another that fuel the rest of the list! Last Sunday I worshipped in Dummerston where they had just welcomed Rev. Shawn Bracebridge as their new pastor. Following worship they held their quarterly congregational meeting. It was a check-in on their 2016-2017 goals. How were they doing? They were able to cross off 'search for and call a new pastor'! Were they missing anything? One suggested that they needed to find a way to be nourished in faith together between worship services. Perhaps lay led Bible Studies since their new pastor had enough else to do? He volunteered to lead one.

Prayer, Bible and God Talk tucked into every corner of a church's life is the leaven - the yeast - that can make a difference - it is powerful as it ferments and becomes contagious as it touches every single bit of flour. Something grows that may not be comfortable or safe - but it will definitely make a difference in the lives of those inside and outside that congregation.

So - in case you haven't noticed - something new has been added to the UCC Daily Devotional ([sign up here](#)). Monday's Daily Devotional includes suggestions for Small Group Discussions. Whatever group is meeting that week - why not add that conversation to the agenda. There is something called '[Congregations Weekly](#) - sparking ministry conversations'. This provides a thought starter from one of our national staff - in their area of ministry - and ends with a couple of questions for conversations in your monthly Council, Trustee, Deacon, CE, Mission, etc. meetings.

21st century

"The Beatitudes are no spiritual 'to do list' to be attempted by eager, rule-keeping disciples. It is a spiritual 'done' list of the qualities God brings to bear in the people who follow Jesus."

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Sunday, January 29th was Beverly Anderson's last Sunday at the Bridgewater Congregational Church as she is retiring. We'll do this again in a few weeks at Sherburne United Church of Christ. It was no accident that the lectionary included Bev's favorite passage from Micah. Well done, good and faithful servant!

The UCC has a new video - [Trading Places](#) - a very timely conversation starter - in light of recent executive orders and demonstrations - and has a helpful study guide.

Of course, there are always Bible studies, Lectionary study groups, Book Reads, Prayer groups - there is a place for everyone in this vision of being Church together.

The more we engage one another in faith conversations in our local church it becomes the yeast of the Kingdom of God being mixed into the flour of your congregation and your community.

And the result? Just imagine how many loaves of bread can be baked and broken in extravagant welcome and continuing testimony of the Good News of Jesus Christ! That would be the number of loaves that result from yeast mixed into the flour that would fill one and a half Roman bushels. Intersity Press reports that three measures of flour equals 50 pounds of flour - enough bread for 100 people. And Amy Jill Levine, in her Jewish Annotated New Testament reports that three measures is 60 pounds! Yes, it takes time and patience to knead the yeast into 60 pounds of flour and to let it rise into its fullness.

But Jesus is not about satisfaction. Jesus is about abundance shared with the whole world.

Pam Lucas

## **PASTORING CHALLENGING PARISHIONERS: A Model and a Guide**

### **Who?**

All Pastors who, in Christ, love their parishioners.  
All Pastors who, even in Christ, have a hard time loving challenging parishioners.

### **Which parishioners?**

Dear ones who challenge us: pastorally, relationally, in committee meetings, in relationships with other parishioners and with staff.



WE WELCOME INTO THE WORLD  
Margaux Kirk-Jager

born at home to Jeremy Kirk and  
Kayla Jager  
at 4:53 on Jan 10th  
10 lbs and 2 ounces.  
Margaux is pronounced "Margo"

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## The Conference Resource Center

The following **VHS tapes** are available at no cost.  
[Email me](#) if you are interested in them and I will mail them out to you.

Here is this week's selection:

[Andrew Lloyd Webber's  
Jesus Christ Super Star](#)

[Godspell](#)

[Hallelujah Music Box](#)

[The Christian Story](#)

[Jesus](#)

[In the Eyes of a Stranger](#)

[Islam Empire of Faith](#)

[William Sloane Coffin  
A Lover's Quarrel with America](#)



These are just a few of the large amount here at the Conference. If you are in the area and want to stop in and look to see what we have on VHS, please do.

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**"Journey of the Universe: A Story for Our Times"**  
**Yale University Online Classes Now Open to the**

## Why a workshop on this topic?

Sometimes the challenges are so great that we wish we had a model of understanding and a method for engaging in pastorally effective ways.

## How will this workshop help?

This workshop is designed to give some conceptual models for understanding challenging folks from a mental and relational health perspective. Through small group discussion and role play, participants will have opportunities to discuss these models and to practice effective ways to engage.

February 22, 2017

10:00am - 3:00pm

Bethany Church - Randolph, Vermont

\$15.00 - Lunch included

[Click Here to Register](#)

## Our Facilitator

The Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola is the Pastor of the First Congregational/Puffer UM Church in Morrisville. She holds a PhD. in psychology, and before her ordination eight years ago, was a clinical psychologist in hospital and private practice for more than 20 years. Her specialty areas included sequelae of severe childhood abuse in teens and adults, eating disorders, and women's mental health. She has also given papers and workshops on working with challenging clients in the therapy relationship, women and substance abuse; and is published in the areas of the sequelae of incest, and rethinking labels for severe personality disorders.

## Meet the Musician for Annual Meeting

We are excited to announce that Paul Vasile will be the featured musician for the 222nd Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference, UCC!



Paul is "Committed to expressing and exploring faith in new ways, Paul composes sacred music that expands and enriches the church's language of praise and prayer. His music is represented in *Glory to God*, the new hymnal of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and he has written extensively for St. Lydia's and Not So Churchy, emergent congregations in Brooklyn. He is also a contributor to the forthcoming Convergence Music Project, an online musical

## Public

Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, Senior Lecturers and Research Scholars at Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies are currently offering four six-week online courses. These are featured as a specialization under the theme of "Journey of the Universe: A Story for our Times." This specialization includes two courses on Journey of the Universe and a course on the Worldview of Thomas Berry. Each of these courses can be taken independently, followed by an Integrating Capstone course. These are MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) available on Coursera to anyone, anywhere on the planet.

This is the first MOOC specialization for Yale and the first MOOCs for the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Learners may audit these courses FREE OF CHARGE (with the exception of the capstone course). Or learners may register for all of the courses for a small fee and, upon completion, receive a specialization certificate. The courses do not have to be completed within the six week period, rather, learners may finish at their own pace.

[For the entire article click here!](#)



## Sunday School Coordinator

Williston Federated Church seeks a Sunday School Coordinator.

resource for Emerging and Progressive Churches."

Read more about Paul at [www.paulvasile.com](http://www.paulvasile.com)

The 222nd Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference, UCC will take place April 28-29, 2017 at Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee. **You can book your room now by calling Lake Morey Resort at 800-423-1211 and asking for the "Vermont Conference Annual Meeting" group rate.**

**Registration for the Annual Meeting will open in mid-February.** Everyone-delegates, authorized ministers, church members-is welcome and invited to the 222nd Annual Meeting!

## It's UCC Yearbook Time!

The United Church of Christ's annual Yearbook is the central reference point for the UCC for information about churches, ministers and other data the UCC uses to better understand the health of our denomination and identify trends as we all plan for the future.

The UCC Yearbook relies upon all UCC churches, associations and conferences to submit their statistical information at the beginning of each year so the reference data is as accurate as possible. Using the UCC Data Hub, churches may upload their information directly for the Yearbook.

The Vermont Conference asks that every church in our Conference participate in the UCC Yearbook information submission effort. Each church should designate one person to be responsible for this effort and notify Jesse Davis at the Vermont Conference so he can be a resource to them. Jesse will be in contact with these designated people as the Yearbook process moves forward. The UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) has made resources available to take you step by step through the data upload process in the UCC Data Hub.

You can access the 2017 Yearbook Instructions and video tutorials

Plan and supervise Sunday School for children aged 3 years through Senior High. Recruit, train, and support teachers and other volunteers in Sunday School program. The Sunday School Coordinator will serve as a consistent and welcoming presence on Sunday mornings. This individual will coordinate and oversee our Christian Education Program and assist with Sunday School teaching when needed.

For a job description and to apply, Email [Office@steeple.org](mailto:Office@steeple.org) at the Williston Federated Church.

### Resources from WorshipWell

Be sure to check out the worship resources available at: [worshipwell.church](http://worshipwell.church)



at: [www.ucc.org/research\\_yearbook](http://www.ucc.org/research_yearbook)  
The deadline for uploading church information to the UCC Data Hub is March 8, 2017.

If you are the designated Yearbook person and have questions, please contact the Vermont Conference Ministries Coordinator Jesse Davis at [davisj@vtucc.org](mailto:davisj@vtucc.org) or 802-728-4999.

Thank you!



**Thank You for Reading**  
**An Open and Affirming Conference**  
[For the E-Kit Archive](#)

